

Message Text

SECRET

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46

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 IO-03

EUR-10 SP-02 PM-03 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02

DODE-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 AF-04 PRS-01 PA-01 USIA-04

DRC-01 /073 W

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P R 191628Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2916

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

S E C R E T RABAT 3937

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA; REFERENDUM SOON?

1. SPANISH EMBASSY OFFICIAL TOLD ME AUG 19 IN CONFIDENCE THAT GOS PLANNING TO ANNOUNCE "VERY SOON" ITS PLANS FOR HOLDING REFERENDUM IN SPANISH SAHARA. HE IMPLIED THAT REFERENDUM ITSELF WOULD BE HELD FAIRLY SOON AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, HE ANSWERED SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUSLY THAT GOS HAD TOLD MOROCCANS DURING MADRID TALKS LAST WEEK THAT SPAIN WOULD BE GOING AHEAD SOON WITH THE REFERENDUM.

2. MEANWHILE, IMPROVED PUBLIC MOROCCAN-SPANISH ATMOSPHERE CONTINUES TO PREVAIL HERE FOLLOWING MADRID TALKS. SEMI-OFFICIAL
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LE MATIN AUG 19 CARRIED NO SAHARA ARTICLES OR ANTI-SPANISH

MATERIAL FOR FIRST TIME IN MANY WEEKS. EVEN OPPOSITION PAPERS, WHICH HAD EXPRESSED SOME INITIAL DISAPPOINTMENT OVER LACK OF SUBSTANTIVE MOVEMENT IN MADRID TALKS, HAVE NOW TONED DOWN. ALSO, IN MORE CONCRETE VEIN, EMBASSY OFFICER WHO ENTERED MOROCCO FROM SPAIN AUGUST 16 VIA CEUTA REPORTS THAT BORDER TRANSIT HAS NOW RETURNED TO NORMAL; CUSTOMS OFFICIAL IN RABAT SAYS THIS IS RESULT OF ORDERS ISSUED BY HIGHER AUTHORITY TO FACILITATE SUCH CROSSINGS.

3. COMMENT: CURRENT IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE COULD RAPIDLY DETERIORATE IF SPANISH ANNOUNCE SAHARA REFERENDUM WITHOUT SOME PRIOR GOS-GOM UNDERSTANDING. WE THUS FAR HAVE NO EVIDENCE SUCH UNDERSTANDING HAS BEEN REACHED.
COON

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SOVEREIGNTY, REFERENDUMS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, SELFDETERMINATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974RABAT03937
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740228-0047
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740836/aaaabfaf.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 APR 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <03 MAR 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPANISH SAHARA: REFERENDUM SOON?
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MO, SS, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005